THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Direct recruitment to all Group 'C' & 'D' posts on the Railways is made by selection through Railway Recruitment Boards. The vacancies are given wide publicity including publication in the Employment News etc. and all those who apply against such notifications, are considered for recruitment on the Railways. This procedure is in conformity with the Constitutional provisions regarding euality in opportunity to all in the matter of employment under the Central Government and guidelines issued by Department of Personnel and Training (which is the Nodal Department), pursuant to the directives of Hon'ble Supreme Court.

In view of this it is not feasible to earmark any post for a particular region.

Earning of Railways

1720. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railways have earned Rs. 22,001 crores upto September, 2004, a surplus of Rs. 481.00 crores;

(b) whether it is a fact that there has been a five per cent growth in terms of passenger traffic and freight traffic by 1.34 per cent;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the number of accidents during the period came down to 115 compared to 189 during the corresponding period of the previous year; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The Actual Earnings of the Railways to end of September, 04 amounted to Rs. 22178.60 crores and Ordinary Working Expenses amounted to Rs. 17451.56 crore. Hence, the net variation is Rs. 453.86 crore.

(b) The growth in passenger traffic (No. of passengers originating) on Indian Railways upto September, 2004 compared to the same period of 2003 is 5.9 per cent and that of freight is 6.9 per cent. However, if target for freight loading is taken into account, the growth is 1.34 per cent.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The details of accidents for the period April to September, 2004, compared with the corresponding period of last year is as under:—

	April-Sept, 04	April-Sept., 03
Collisions	5	2
Derailments	71	120
Accidents at Unmanned Level Crossings	30	51
Accidents at Manned Level Crossings	2	4
Fire in Trains	6	8
Miscellaneous	1	4
TOTAL:	115	189

All figures are provisional.

Kullhars

†1721. SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the use of Kullhars and Khadi etc. for the use of commuters in Railways has been started as per the announcement of the Minister, if so, since when; and

(b) the number of artisans got employment as a result of the said decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. It has been decided to introduce the use of Kullhars and Khadi w.e.f. 25.5.2004 and 09.06.2004 respectively.

(b) Introduction of Kullhars and Khadi/handloom products have provided job avenues for artisans and weaker sections of society as a whole. This has given additional source of earning and livelihood in the rural sector. However, it is not possible to assess the exact quantum of employment generated as a result of these decisions.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.